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SUBJECT: Italy Supports Copenhagen Accord; Waiting for BASIC
Countries to Sign On Before Doing Outreach

REFS: a) 01/22/10 Parker-Burns - Preston b) 01/21/10 Preston -
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¶1. (SBU) Summary: Italian FonMin Frattini confirmed to the Ambassador that Italy supports the Copenhagen Accord on climate change. Through the EU, Italy will associate itself with and inscribe a target in the accord. Frattini dismissed the idea that Tunisia would listen to Italian urging to sign up with the accord, saying that Tunisia was waiting instead to see what the major emerging economies would do. Foreign Ministry (MFA) officials said that a decision by the BASIC group to inscribe targets in the accord should make it easier for other countries to sign onto it, and more productive for Italy to urge them to do so. The MFA officer in charge of climate issues said that Minister Frattini often discusses climate in his meetings with foreign counterparts, and that she is sure that in such meetings in the future, he will urge countries to support the Accord. Comment: Requests to Italy for climate outreach will be much more likely to bear fruit if they are framed in the context of regular bilateral climate consultations. See para 6 for more detail. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) The Ambassador raised ref c points, urging Italy to associate itself with and inscribe a greenhouse-gas-reduction target in the Copenhagen Accord, with Italian Foreign Minister Franco Frattini on January 21. Frattini confirmed that Italy will support the Copenhagen Accord. (The MFA Coordinator for Environmental Affairs in the European Integration Directorate General, Alberto Cutillo, noted later that the association/inscribing will be done by the EU Presidency and Commission, on behalf of the 27 member states and the Commission.) Frattini dismissed the idea (raised by the Ambassador in follow-up to the 1/19/10 conference call with DSECC Pershing) that Italy could persuade Tunisia to associate itself with the Accord. He said, "Tunisia doesn't care, they won't listen to us until they see what the big countries do."

¶3. (SBU) On January 20 SCICouns passed ref c points, and the request for outreach to Tunisia and/or other countries where Italy has influence, to MFA Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development Director Giovanna Piccarreta; Environment Ministry Diplomatic Advisor Antonio Bernardini; and Environment Ministry DG Corrado Clini. SCICouns also passed the ref a model association

language and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change letter to Counselor Cutillo and to expert Sabrina Di Nicola in Piccarreta's office. Piccarreta said she is sure that FonMin Frattini will include climate in his discussions with foreign counterparts after January 31, and that he will urge them to support the Accord.

¶4. (SBU) Both Cutillo and Di Nicola noted that a decision by the BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) group to inscribe targets in the Accord should make it easier for other countries to sign onto it, and more productive for Italy to urge them to do so. Cutillo explained that the EU discussed outreach in support of the Accord at a COREPER meeting in Brussels the week of January 18; at the time, participants had not heard of the BASIC meeting in India this week, and feared that they would not sign onto the Accord. Since there was no consensus, the COREPER decided to take no official outreach action as the EU, but to permit countries that wanted to do outreach to go ahead. Italy was not enthusiastic about doing outreach, Cutillo explained, saying "Given European discontent with the Copenhagen Accord, and with the role played by the EU at Copenhagen, it didn't seem coherent for the EU to become the best advocates of the Accord." He noted that if the response to the Accord were very poor, and other major players did not join, the COREPER decision would then give the EU room to consider their options.

¶5. (SBU) Environment Ministry Diplomatic Advisor Bernardini was even more negative about Copenhagen, holding "The outcome of Copenhagen was a disaster, there should not be any ambiguity about it." Piccarreta noted that this was Bernardini's personal view, not that of the GOI, which supports the Accord. She said that Bernardini is concerned with what he sees as yet more fragmentation/duplication of climate negotiating fora. Bernardini did confirm that Italy, as part of the EU, would support the Accord.

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¶6. (SBU) Comment: As we move into the post-Copenhagen negotiations, requests to Italy for climate outreach will be much more likely to bear fruit if they are framed in the context of regular bilateral climate consultations. The Italian Environment Ministry has, for the past year, been seeking to understand how the Obama Administration would like to channel the formerly active bilateral climate cooperation and dialogue which took place under the U.S.-Italy climate science and technology partnership 2001-2008. That partnership was launched at the head-of-state level; five joint partnership meetings took place, the most recent in 2007. Environment Ministry Director General Clini has called for the U.S. and Italy to work together in third countries such as China, where he has a cooperation program that has been active for a decade (ref D). Clini most recently masterminded Italy's \$30 million contribution to the U.S.-led Climate REDI initiative, announced in Copenhagen by Italian Environment Minister Prestigiacomo in the presence of DOE Secretary Chu. End comment.
THORNE